

ABSTRACT

A systems and methods described herein may be incorporated into a "service marketplace" system that matches users with potential information or service providers and establishes a real-time communications connection between the user and a selected information provider. In one embodiment, an alternate is selected for the user when the service provider that the user is trying to connect with cannot be reached. In an alternative embodiment, the alternates can be used in conjunction with the service provider that does connect with the user in order to provide a second opinion or possibly deeper background information. In one embodiment, the service providers can either be a live person at the other end of the connection or a recording.